

L E T T E R

TO

THE RT. HON. THOMAS CONOLLY,

SECRETARY TO THE WHIG CLUB.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

THE DECLARATIONS AND RESOLUTIONS  
OF THAT SOCIETY.

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*Discedite a Contactu ac Dividite Turbidos, id stabile  
ad poenitentiam, id fidei Vinculum erit.*

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## L E T T E R, &c.

S I R,

**Y**OU may possibly be displeased, you cannot be surpris'd at any public address. Having made an appeal to the nation, if you do not desire, you may probably expect an answer; and have only to lament, that having printed your text, you cannot dictate the comment.

The declarations and resolutions of the Whig Club stand authenticated by your signature as Secretary of this constitutional society. For every sentiment and word of this curious performance, you have stood forth the doughty and responsible champion, and though I would willingly have withheld, I cannot envy you the honour

After so long a course of political life, in which you had been so far consistent and uniform as to express your perpetual abhorrence of introducing British party into Ireland, little did I apprehend that you should be foremost to authorise a scheme for its systematic establishment:—You cannot plead that you were not warned of the trap in which you have been ensnared. The cunning serpent had long endeavoured to draw

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you

you into the circle of its fascination:—Wearied with the struggles of resistance, you have at length fallen into its mouth.

You must feel most uncommonly delighted by your change of character. From being a leading volunteer in the cause of Ireland, you are now dwindled into a wretched skirmisher in a corps of partizans. Who would have believed that you would have courted the noble employment of circulating the forms of indenture for binding apprentices to British faction?

As long as you maintained your station as a leading representative of the landed interest, boasting and proving your independence and integrity, every man was zealous to preserve your fame. Your errors were attributed to honest motives, and even your inconsistencies were respected. But when you avow yourself the agent of British party, you not only forfeit every claim to confidence, but you even challenge opposition and distrust. A motive evidently bad, an end clearly pernicious, vitiates the character which adopts them, and taints the fairest measures with suspicion or criminality.

But though you are ready to prove the dupe, are you assured that the people of Ireland are content to act as accomplices to the Whig Club. Are they prepared to become a contemptible and passive engine, to be played off in every direction which may suit the designs of English opposition?

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When I shall have fully examined the nature of your articles of enlistment, and pointed out their tendency, I shall not apprehend any general disposition to back your beating orders: The volunteers of Ireland started up at a far different call, and flocked to a far different standard.

I will do you this justice at least, that you are not ashamed of your designs, or studious to conceal the objects of your enterprize. They come boldly forth from the canvas, and are admirably grouped and prominent in the fore-ground.

Yet from respect to your character, and from knowledge of the goodness and generosity of your heart, I am willing to believe you have not very seriously considered what you have so boldly promulgated. I am persuaded you are not well aware of the force of your expressions, that you have little weighed their import and extent, and are yet to learn the propositions which you have blindly subscribed. Can you be apprised that in signing the ominous preamble to your resolutions, you have declared your sincere conviction and assurance of the following assertions:

First, That an administration formed under Mr. Pitt is more dangerous to Ireland than a government deriving under Mr. Fox.

Second, That Mr. Fox in conceding the right of external legislation to Ireland, concurred in the principle of that concession.

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Third,



Third, That you approve the principles of Mr. Fox and his associates because they are your own.

Fourth, That Mr. Pitt and his administration have not only insidiously endeavoured to infringe our renovated constitution, but that besides many alarming circumstances you clearly perceive a settled and premeditated plan to sap the liberties of Ireland.

Fifth, That to overwhelm Ireland with expences and consequent debt is the way to effect the horrid purpose.

These are the propositions which lie couched in your preface, a combination of unfounded assertion and false inference, of wicked misrepresentation and wretched logic.

If these assertions were true, Mr. Pitt and any government appointed by his influence, ought not to be opposed by resolutions but with arms. I do not consider you overgifted with clearness of sight, or distinguished from your fellow-subjects by any superior sagacity. I may suppose without offence that the eyes and intellects of the nation are as quick as Mr. Conolly's. If then this notable plot of Mr. Pitt, this desperate and premeditated plan be so clearly perceivable, why do we lose our time in paltry declarations and projects of drinking clubs? Let us beat the alarm, sound the trumpet, and summon the volunteers of Ireland to the standard of resistance,

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I need not remind you that the existence of a design so infamous would constitute the most heinous crime, and subject its contrivers to the severest punishment; are you then forgetful that the imputation of such a design, unsupported by a shadow of proof, and belied by every circumstance which can influence the human judgment, cannot but appear in the light of the grossest calumny?

It is not a trivial matter wantonly and falsely to traduce the king's administration, to charge them with a settled plan for the destruction of our liberties, with a premeditated treason against the majesty of the people, and to invite a loyal nation to subscribe such incredible defamation.

For shame! incautious and intemperate man, how has your passion blinded or your prejudice subdued you? thus to avow, in contradiction to reason and common sense, and in defiance of your generous heart, a string of malicious accusations which would dishonour the basest declaimer at a porter house!

But I hear your apology and accept it.  
 " The preamble was written after dinner :  
 " many bumper toasts had been drank : our  
 " eyes saw double : our brains were on fire :  
 " we knew not what we did."

Having branded Mr. Pitt and his government with a charge of a conspiracy against the rights and liberties of the nation, you resolve to support the cause of Mr. Fox and his adherents, with the same ardor and sincerity

cerity you would assert your own. The basis of this confidence, the cement of this alliance is to consist in identity of principle, that congeniality of thought and sentiment, of conviction and belief, that conformity of theory and system, as to the means and ends of government, which forms the surest bond of union among political confederates. *You approve of their principles because they are your own*, and thus endeavour to incorporate yourselves with British opposition, and to form a capital member in their aristocratical league.

Having rashly entered the pale, let me now ask you whether you know the tenets of your political communion? Have you studied the articles of Mr. Fox's faith, and is it from conviction you have subscribed them?

Let me desire your attention for a moment to a few common place observations. Principles are the seed of which actions are the fruit: they agree and correspond like the echo to the sound, and are mutually proved and illustrated by each other. Professions are only valuable as they animate and inspire our conduct. Conduct is so far estimable as it elucidates the motives which direct us.

With these reflections on our mind, let us turn to the great epochas of Mr. Fox's political life, wherein his public principles have been brought to the test, and may be viewed reflected in his conduct as a countenance in a mirror.

This



His first appearance is in the splendid drama of the Middlesex election, where he plays with success the part of chief conspirator against the privileges of the people, transferring the right of election from the constituents to the commons, rejecting the majority of legal voters, and deciding for the candidate whom the electors had constitutionally discarded.

His second grand manœuvre is displayed in his famous coalition with Lord North. The minister who for ten long and disastrous years he had opposed with all the violence of enthusiastic animosity, as the common enemy of freedom and the empire, and the source of every national calamity and disgrace—The man whose political principles he dreaded as contamination, whose association in government he considered as infamy, whom he had repeatedly threatened with impeachment, the scaffold and the block—With this vilified, scorned, abjured and excommunicated person, does Mr. Fox unite for the purposes of ambition and power, strains him to his heart, holds him up to the nation as his friend, applauds for his honour, his steadiness, his integrity, and in alliance with this object of his former execration, is content to forfeit all claim to consistency, all pretence to the support, regard and confidence of the people, in the vain hope of establishing himself, by the means of their united partisans in the two houses of  
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parliament, the uncontrouled and perpetual dictator, superior at once to the influence of the monarch and the power of the people.

With this view he proceeds in his bold career to his third capital and darling enterprise. He resolves to secure the success of what he termed his infamy, by the most daring project of plunder. Nothing satisfies his thirsty ambition but the absolute annihilation of the chartered rights of the first trading company in the world, and the entire usurpation of their immense and opulent patronage. As the quarrel of those great leaders, Mr. Fox and Lord North, had torn America from Britain, they forget and console their sorrow for this mighty loss, in the speculative partition of India, and project a compensation for the diminution of empire, by the robbery of the prerogative. Every one knows the fortunate defeat of this execrable design, the revolt and indignation of the people, their spirit in protecting the constitution, and their zeal in delivering their king; at the same time they know and do justice to the characters who first pointed out the danger, and erected the banners of loyalty and the constitution.

Upon a fourth important question (and the more important to us as it particularly regards *our* rights) Mr. Fox's conduct may have been honest and disinterested, but I know not that it can be approved of by Irishmen. In consenting to repeal the assumed  
power

power of the British parliament to legislate externally for Ireland, he argues the expediency of retaining it. He concedes, indeed, the right as what Ireland is determined to obtain, but wishes to withhold it as what Great Britain ought to preserve. He vigorously combats the measure which he yields, and protests against his own act, as the result of necessity, not of conviction. As a British minister, grasping at power, as a political speculist, arguing for imperial supremacy, he may reason abstractedly and ambitiously right, but I trust no Irishman is ready to approve his principle, or adopt it as his own.

The fifth remarkable æra in Mr. Fox's life, is distinguished by his conduct in the regency, wherein the hastiness of his ambition, and his eagerness for immediate power, displayed themselves in full splendour.—Neither fatigue nor illness arrests his impatient ardour; he flies to the House of Commons, and boldly proclaims the unheard-of right in the Prince of Wales to assume the government, scarcely admitting the competency of parliament to recognize his pretensions. He saw clearly that this principle, once established, placed him on the instant in the seat of power: kindled at the view he regards not the wounds he may inflict on the constitution, the stigma he may fix on the Prince of Wales, or the disgrace which must attend his own defeat.

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This



This doctrine of Mr. Fox was received in England with universal and merited reprobation. Is the Whig Club of Ireland prepared to adopt it as their own? Do you not discern that if the Prince of Wales had a right to assume the government, you must rescind your proceedings of last session, as so much usurpation on his prerogative, and renounce the competency you so proudly assumed? If Mr. Fox's principles were right, the Lords and Commons of Ireland were manifestly wrong. And I leave it to your abilities and candour, to reconcile your partiality for Mr. Fox's doctrine, with your detestation of Lord Buckingham's, both equally militating against the Irish proceedings, though equally opposite to each other, and both agreeing to deny the competency of Ireland to elect a different executive from the executive of Great Britain.

You adopt then the principles of Mr. Fox and his adherents as your own;—you assert, as a principle, the right of the Commons to usurp by indirect means, the privileges of election—to set aside the legal choice of the constituent body, and to return as fitting member a legally rejected candidate.

You assert, as a principle, that it is right for men of integrity, consistency, and virtue, to coalesce for the purposes of ambition with characters directly the reverse, and to take as partners of their counsels, and associates of their power; men, who have ruined and dis-  
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membered the empire, by the tyranny, the blunders, the corruption, and prodigality of their measures.

You assert, as a principle, that with a view to establish party power, it is allowable to invade the most sacred charters, to usurp an immense patronage, and to make a partition of the executive.

You assert, as a principle, that external legislation belongs properly to Great Britain, that it was not expedient for Ireland to demand it, and that it became England, if possible, to retain that criterion of empire.

Lastly, You assert, as a principle, that in the case of the incapacity of the King, the Prince of Wales has a right to assume the government, and that all the measures of the Irish Parliament last session were upon that ground unjustifiable.

The facts which have been adduced in proof of Mr. Fox's principles are too notorious to question: and we must either admit, that in the cases alledged, he acted according to his principles or against them. In preferring the former side of the dilemma, he must be abjured for the pernicious tendency of his tenets, so subversive at different times of the rights of the people, the rights of the parliament, and the rights of the crown. If we adopt the latter, what apology can we make for that character, or what confidence can be reposed in him, who is prepared at any time, to renounce and sacri-



fice the best principles for the purposes of the worst ambition? And were you to take another line of defence, and to maintain that Mr. Fox's principles are not the principles of his party, who reject and disavow them, how contemptible must be the conduct of that party, who blindly or meanly submit to follow the dictates, and support the ambition of a leader whose measures they disapprove, and whose principles they condemn?

While men are under the dominion of prejudice and passion, their reasonings are generally as absurd as their passions are extravagant. To maintain that the means of sapping the liberties of Ireland is to overwhelm her with expences, and consequent debt, was left for the superior sagacity of the Whig Club. If common sense and universal experience did not proclaim the reverse, we should imagine, that with the revolutions of England and Ireland in their memories, and the situation of Europe before their eyes, they would not have concluded so absurdly.

What brought into question the high prerogative of Charles the First, provoked resistance to its illegal strides, enforced the meeting and continuance of parliaments, but the expences of the monarch and the debts of the crown? Debt made the crown dependent. The constitution rose and triumphed in its distresses. Grievance and redress were coupled with supply. Privilege attached itself to grants, and liberty went hand in hand with contribution.

To



To what is to be attributed our successful demand of a free trade in 1779, but to an exhausted nation and a bankrupt treasury? The old resources had failed and were inadequate. New channels of trade were necessary for new projects of finance, and the necessities of government conspired with the oppression of the people, to restore freedom to commerce, and revive the rights of the constitution.

What is regenerating the constitution, and renovating the liberties of France? The exorbitancy of her profusion and establishments, and the enormity of her debt; the necessity on one hand to supply their annual deficit by imposing new taxes, and on the other, of resorting to the states of the nation to grant them. The spirit of that oppressed people germinates from the beggary of the crown. Their liberties seem to shoot from the vices of administration. Oeconomy would have perpetuated the slavery of the French. They are enfranchised by the prodigality of government.

When I see administration negligent and profuse, I do not tremble for the liberties of the people, but for the security of government. I should only despise a ministry, who in order to establish despotism, should resort to means so destructive of its purpose, and must smile at the absurdity of those who could seriously impute such folly.

So much for your preamble, a noble foundation for a college of *congenial characters*,  
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who are to instruct their disciples in the *doctrines of genuine Whiggism*: or rather a fountain of constitutional virtue at which the *ardent lovers of liberty* are to sip the sacred streams of reason, candour, and truth, undefiled by calumny, unmixed with sophistry, and unadulterated by party.

In beginning the perusal of your resolutions, I almost forgot the absurdities of your preamble. I felt myself warmed and refreshed by a ray of reason and the constitution, but it soon vanished and left me again to grope in the mists of obscurity and prejudice.

“ Resolved, That the great object of this  
 “ society is the constitution of the realm, as  
 “ settled by Great Britain and Ireland in  
 “ 1688, and re-established in Ireland in 1782.

II. “ That we will support and maintain  
 “ as a principal object and fundamental part  
 “ of that constitution, the sacred rights of  
 “ the people, and above all, that great and  
 “ indispensable right of the subjects of this  
 “ realm, to be free from, and independent  
 “ on the authority of any parliament or legislature  
 “ whatsoever, save only the parliament of Ireland,  
 “ that is to say, the King of Ireland, and the Lords and Commons  
 “ of the realm.”

Such are your two leading resolutions, which breath a truly loyal and constitutional spirit. May the nation for ever maintain them as the chief articles of their political belief,

belief, the true foundation of obedience to the law, and allegiance to the sovereign:—doctrines of such vital consequence cannot be too fully explained, or too accurately interpreted.

First then with regard to the revolution in England and Ireland of 1688. At this memorable and instructive period, the rights of the people of England, derived to them from the unalienable grant of nature, or the original charters of the constitution, were fully declared and finally established: and these rights were at the same time, perpetuated to the people of Ireland, as in the same degree partakers of the same inheritance, both natural and political.

As far forth as the rights of men and the privileges of subjects, the people of both kingdoms being in one predicament, were equally affected and equally benefited by the revolution. With regard to the rights of the crown, the constitution of the two kingdoms being dissimilar, the effects produced by this grand event, were conformable to the respective nature of those rights; each kingdom vindicating, by a law of its own, its own constitution.

Under the British constitution, the Lords and Commons of England possessed an inherent right, which had been repeatedly exercised, upon the malversation of the monarch, to dethrone him, and to alter the line of succession.

Under



Under the Irish constitution, the King of England was by express law, *ipso facto*, King of Ireland.

When therefore, James the Second had endeavoured to overturn the fundamental constitution of England; in church and state, by dispensing with the laws and introducing Papists into power, and when being resisted in his arbitrary and despotic measures by the efforts of the nation at home, and armed assistance from abroad, he withdrew himself from the kingdom, a forlorn and abandoned fugitive, the estates of the realm asserted the principles of the British constitution, by declaring their sovereign to have abdicated, the throne to be vacant, and by conferring the crown upon William and Mary.

From the moment of the abdication of James, and the settlement of the crown upon the head of William, the former was, *ipso facto*, deposed from the throne of Ireland by the law of this realm, and the latter became our legal sovereign in his stead. James, however, in defiance of the constitution of Ireland, still maintained his claim to her imperial crown; he passes into the kingdom, summons and holds a parliament, raises forces, enacts laws, and exercises for a time all the powers and prerogatives of a sovereign: but on his defeat and expulsion by the arms of our glorious deliverer, what was the course pursued by a legal monarch and  
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a legal parliament? The whole period of time from the abdication of James in England to his expulsion from Ireland, is considered as usurpation. Every record of his power is destroyed, every vestige of his government is erased, and the act of recognition is passed to assert and vindicate the constitution of the crown of Ireland, as perpetually annexed to, and dependent upon, the crown of England.

Such are the prominent features in the revolution of 1688, as it regards the rights of men and citizens, and the tenure of the two crowns; they are ratified and recorded by three imperial instruments.

First, the Bill of Rights, which being merely declarative of ancient existing privileges, extends to every subject in every part of the empire. Second, the English Act for the Settlement of the Crown upon William and Mary. Thirdly, the Irish Act of Recognition. The two former asserting the constitution of the British, the latter the constitution of the Irish crown.

In pledging ourselves to support and defend the principles of this glorious æra, what is it that we profess, and to what do we subscribe?

I. We engage to support the declaration of rights, the common birth-right of Englishmen and Irishmen, that sacred and indefeasible inheritance, which having been secured

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by the blood of our ancestors, we are bound to transmit unimpaired to posterity.

II. We declare our approbation of those principles and that conduct which erected the banner of resistance against the despotic machinations of James the Second, dismissed him and his devoted race from the throne of the empire, and established the crowns of Great Britain and Ireland in the families of Orange and Hanover.

Lastly, We acknowledge the crown of Ireland to be inseparably annexed to, and dependent on, the crown of England.

Such being the history of the imperial revolution in 1688, what are the distinguishing characters of the Irish revolution in 1782? Not any change in the rights of Irishmen as individuals, not any change in the monarchical succession of Great Britain, not any change in the annexation of the Irish to the British crown, but simply an alteration as to the supposed dependency and constituent forms of our legislature. The British parliament had bound Ireland by laws, and miscalled the usurpation a right. The privy councils of both kingdoms, had altered or suppressed her bills, and the pernicious practice was sanctioned by the letter or the colour of law. Ireland, in a moment of strength, protests against the usurpation of the British parliament, and the tyranny of the council boards: and at once demands and obtains the redress of her grievances. But in the  
moment



moment of rejecting the supremacy, she courts the connection of England, and emancipated from her parliament, unites with her crown. Hence, a double object pervades her proceedings, first, to establish the independency of her legislature; secondly, to secure the unity of the executive.

The evidences of this important period are recorded in Mr. Fox's Statute of Repeal, in Mr. Grenville's Statute of Renunciation, and in the Irish Act of Mr. Yelverton. The two former acknowledge the independency of our legislature, declare it to exist of right, and that it never can again be questioned or questionable; the latter abolishes the unconstitutional power of the council boards, and confirms the union of the imperial crowns.

What then are we bound to support in maintaining this second revolution?—First, That no power can bind the subjects of Ireland, save only the King, Lords, and Commons of the realm.—Secondly, not to suffer the suppression of our bills by the Irish privy council—or their alteration any where:—and thirdly, to maintain the connection of the Irish with the British crown inviolate, and to preserve the unity of the executive power as the strongest guarantee for our establishments in church and state.

That this was one of the objects of the revolution in 1782, I have only to recite the provisions of Mr. Yelverton's celebrated act.

This statute enacts, "*That the Lord Lieutenant or Chief Governor, do and shall certify all such bills, AND NONE OTHER, as both Houses of Parliament shall judge expedient to be enacted, to his Majesty, under the Great Seal of Ireland, and that all those bills which shall be so certified to his Majesty, under the Great Seal of Ireland, and returned into the same, under the Great Seal of Great Britain, without addition, diminution, or alteration, and none other, shall pass in the parliament of this kingdom.*"

These being the words, it clearly and undeniably follows, that as long as this statute remains, no person whatsoever can legislate for Ireland but the King or Regent of Great Britain.—They alone can command the Great Seal of England. They alone are competent to supply the requisites for a constitutional act of Irish legislation. Whoever asserts that we can appoint a different executive power from the executive power of England, must at the same time assert, that we can constitutionally legislate, without the evidence of the English Great Seal annexed to our bills, and that we can pass laws, without the form and sanction of laws; or else he must maintain that we have a right to renounce, without pretence or necessity, the revolution of 1782; and that whenever it suits the purposes of Irish or British party, and the interests of a casual majority of the Lords and Commons of Ireland, Mr. Yelverton's act is a dead letter and a nullity. If the Whig Club pledge them.

themselves to support the Irish revolution of 1782, they are bound to maintain the letter and the spirit of Mr. Yelverton's act; if they depart from either, they so far reject the constitution and revolution of that period.

You will readily allow, that the consent of the crown to bills, is the highest and most important act of the royal prerogative.—Without the exercise of this power, the army, which is annual, would be disbanded—the supplies, which are annual, would determine; and government, being deprived of its support and its defence, would of necessity be dissolved. But the existence of our connection with England depends upon this circumstance, that the chief magistrate of both kingdoms is the same person. If there were two chief magistrates, two executive powers, two kings, two regents, the empire would be at an end. The idea of an empire with two executive powers, two distinct supreme WILLS, is an absurdity and contradiction in terms. How wisely then has Mr. Yelverton provided for the perpetuity of the empire, by making the evidence of the Great Seal of England a necessary ingredient of an Irish law? For as to support the constitution we must legislate, and in order to legislate, the executive power of England must evidence our acts by the English Great Seal, we must, at all times, acknowledge the executive power of that kingdom as our own, or abandon the constitution.

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I acknowledge the wisdom, I applaud the integrity of the patriotic framers of this law, designed as it evidently is to perpetuate the best security for our liberties, our connexion with the executive power of England, and to render the choice of a different executive, accompanied with consequences so fatal and pernicious, that if we should resolve to commit an act so desperate, as to choose a chief magistrate of our own, we must at the same time determine to renounce the constitution.

Let the Whig Club reject the principles and abjure the provisions of Mr. Yelverton's statute—it is my pride to revere and obey its dictates, I consider it as the safe-guard of my country, the only bond of our connexion with Great Britain, and one of the fundamental pillars and chief ornaments of the Revolution of 1782. It accompanied the demand and restoration of our rights, and it is the best security for their continuance and preservation.

The third resolution I could wish, for the character of its authors, had never appeared; personal and false, it bears not only the cast of party but the colour of resentment. It presumes an assertion which was never uttered, in order to condemn it; and blackens the first character in the land with the imputation of doctrines he never supported. It grieves me, sir, to the heart, to see you made the instrument of stabbing the reputation

tion of a man, you profess and ought to admire, and of undermining his fair fame by sinister artifice, which never could be impaired by honourable attack.

It is fully acknowledged what effect the conduct of the present Lord Chancellor produced in the last session:—his bold and irrefragable arguments abashed the parliament, and have they not convinced the nation, impotently as they were eluded and weakly as they were combated. When fairly stated they never have been, they never can be refuted, I am shocked to view them misrepresented in a performance sanctioned by your signature.

The attack upon Lord Fitzgibbon, in the third and sixth resolutions and in the fourth reason, contain the following statement:

I. That it has been advanced, that the parliament of another country had, in the appointment of a Regent over this realm, a legislative authority.

II. That his Majesty legislates in Ireland as King of Great Britain.

III. That the legislative capacity of the King of Ireland has been denied, and the great seal of another country set up as a substitute for the Imperial Crown of this realm.

Such are the imputed doctrines—if assigned to Lord Fitzgibbon, falsely and injuriously assigned—doctrines which he never advanced, which he never could advance. His ability,

ability, his knowledge, his integrity fully refute the invidious aspersions.

His lordship never asserted that a foreign parliament could legislate for Ireland in the case of a Regent, but he soundly and constitutionally argued, that whenever a Regent was appointed by the parliament of England, that Regent had alone the power of affixing the Great Seal of England to Irish bills. That by the statutes of Ireland, no law could pass to which the Great Seal of England was not affixed, and that it consequently behoved the Lords and Commons to wait for the appointment of a Regent in England, and then to invest him with authority to act in Ireland by Irish law.

Lord Fitzgibbon never advanced that his Majesty legislates in Ireland on the sole capacity of King of Great Britain, but he soundly and constitutionally argued, that whenever he uses the Great Seal of England, he uses it as King of England, and whenever he employs the Great Seal of Ireland, he employs it as King of Ireland.

Third, He never denied the legislative capacity of the King of Ireland, but he soundly and constitutionally argued that the exercise of this capacity was delegated to his Viceroy, who gives the Royal Assent for the King of Ireland to Irish bills in the Irish parliament.

Lord Fitzgibbon never set up the great seal of another country as a substitute for the  
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the imperial crown of this realm, but he soundly and constitutionally argued that the law of Ireland having enacted that all her bills should be returned under the Great Seal of England, we could not, as the law stands, dispense with the evidence of that imperial organ, or pass an act of legislature without its authority.

Such were the principles of Lord Fitzgibbon's argument; which, however distorted and mistated, have certainly never been disproved. When he declared the law under Mr. Yelverton's act, he appealed to its authors. The Chief Baron had introduced it, Mr. Grattan had assisted in the committee; they were its parents, they were responsible for their progeny; he had not introduced however he might approve the law; and whilst it remained unaltered and unrepealed, he was bound as a lawyer to give it a just interpretation, and as a subject to obey its injunctions.

Under this argument of his lordship's, can I be induced to vindicate the conduct of parliament in asserting a right to separate from England in the choice of a Regent, or the censure inflicted on the Viceroy for questioning its legality? By what illegal or arbitrary measure has Lord Buckingham thus merited our indignation? He pleads the obligation of his oath. Would you have forced him to a wilful act of perjury? He pleads his duty to his Sovereign. Would  
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you have driven him to violate its dictates? He asks for warranty of law. Would you punish him for a constitutional scruple on a subject of such magnitude, as the unprecedented transfer of the Royal Power with which he was intrusted by his Sovereign? If the law of Ireland enables the Lords and Commons to elect whom they please for Regent, would it have degraded their dignity to have pointed out the statute? Convinced by the information he had solicited, his Excellency would doubtless have retracted his answer, and complied with their request; but if the law of Ireland confines us to adopt the Regent of England, because he alone could apply the constitutional instrument of Irish legislation, surely there is no reason to be so extremely exasperated at his Excellency's attachment to the law of the land. Perhaps we required too much of Lord Buckingham in demanding him to arrogate a dispensing power. When we see him supported by the best legal opinions on the bench, or in the hall, was it not hazardous to proclaim that he was *ill advised*? An over scrupulous adherence to the law can hardly be considered *unwarrantable*: A sacred attachment to the sole principle which connects the empire, can scarcely be deemed *unconstitutional*.

When his Sovereign's health was despaired of, and his recovery considered almost impossible, Lord Buckingham would not have industriously

industriously differed from the Irish parliament. Would he have wantonly irritated his enemies when they were on the threshold of power? When his influence was daily diminishing, and he felt himself falling into the hands of his adversaries, would he have wished to have furnished a handle to their malice, and a justification to their resentment? Superior considerations of public duty, and a proud jealousy of his character and fame could alone have urged him to the awful trial. Gratitude and affection to his Sovereign whom he disdained to abandon, regard for his oath and sacrament, attachment to the cause of the empire, attention to the security of Ireland, reverence for the laws of the realm, combined their impressive and animating motives. Actuated by these sacred influences, if he was inspired to resist the application of the two houses, and expose himself to the animosities of a party then considered as triumphant, surely our opposition to his conduct should be lost in the admiration of his principles. Resentment should sink before intentions so honourable—we should pardon the error, if there was an error, and at least applaud the motive.

But you will ask was Lord Buckingham justified, publicly and ministerially to question the rights of the people of Ireland? Sir, he never questioned our rights; he appealed to the law of Ireland, that sacred source of



obedience whence the streams of the constitution flow, and on the law he rested himself as on a rock. If he found it written in the statute book of Ireland, that the Great Seal of England was necessary for an act of Irish legislation; if he found this statute the object and the corner stone of the Revolution of 1782, which established the Irish constitution—he would indeed have questioned the rights of Irishmen, if he had presumptuously endeavoured to defeat its intention.

If I may be allowed to give a tongue to the conduct of Lord Buckingham, and attribute the powers of utterance to his actions, thus does he seem to address the people of Ireland :

“ Having established the independency  
 “ of your parliament, you have preserved,  
 “ and wisely preserved the Crown of Ireland  
 “ dependent upon the Crown of Great Bri-  
 “ tain; and by making the evidence of the  
 “ Great Seal of England, a necessary ingre-  
 “ dient in your laws, your great object is  
 “ perpetuated. What had otherwise remained  
 “ defective in your constitution, is now  
 “ compleat, and perfect:—minorities may  
 “ occur, maladies may incapacitate the So-  
 “ vereign: the empire is still safe: the unity  
 “ of the executive power is still secure: who-  
 “ ever is the legal chief magistrate of Great  
 “ Britain, can alone govern Ireland, accord-  
 “ ing to its laws and constitution, and can  
 “ alone

“ alone be legally adopted by the people of  
 “ this realm : had a law of this kind not  
 “ existed, you would have retained a right  
 “ of choosing your own executive, in the  
 “ cases of minorities and incapacities. But  
 “ you would have retained a right inimical  
 “ to your constitution, dangerous to the con-  
 “ nexion of the empire, and exposed to all  
 “ the projects of ambition, and all the cabals  
 “ of faction. In exchange for a natural  
 “ right, so little desirable and so highly  
 “ dangerous, you have preferred the security  
 “ of perpetual connexion with the Crown  
 “ of England. I admire your good sense in  
 “ the preference, and your wisdom in the  
 “ execution. Your representatives having  
 “ passed an act to effect this salutary pur-  
 “ pose, it is my duty carefully to preserve  
 “ it from infringement :—you will laugh at  
 “ all false appeals to your dignity and pride,  
 “ the artful tricks of demagogues to hood-  
 “ wink your judgments, by the blinds of  
 “ prejudice. If you have for ever adopted  
 “ the King of England as your own Sove-  
 “ reign, and yet are not degraded and en-  
 “ flaved, how is your independence affected,  
 “ if you have obliged yourselves by your  
 “ own laws to have the same regent as  
 “ Great Britain? You will justly scorn such  
 “ idle mockery. As to myself, having con-  
 “ tributed to render your liberties unquesti-  
 “ onable, by inducing Great Britain to ex-  
 “ tend the measure of a simple repeal to an  
 “ act

“ act of renunciation, little do I respect the  
 “ imputation of those who accuse me of ques-  
 “ tioning your rights, when I refuse to dis-  
 “ regard your laws. The laws of the land  
 “ are the best rights of Irishmen, and the  
 “ maintainance of these laws is their prime  
 “ duty; no power upon earth but the com-  
 “ plete parliament of Ireland can alter or  
 “ repeal them: partial bodies may address,  
 “ may resolve, may censure. As represen-  
 “ tative of my King, as guardian of his  
 “ people, it is my province to uphold the  
 “ constitution, and to maintain the law. I  
 “ will faithfully discharge my office, and  
 “ trust to the justice of the nation.”

Such is the appeal and justification clearly  
 contained in Lord Buckingham's conduct. If  
 nevertheless, the Lords and Commons were  
 pleased to inflict on him a public censure, I  
 know not that the Whig Club have a right to  
 assert that it was inflicted on behalf of the  
 people. Several counties have publicly ap-  
 proved the conduct of Lord Buckingham,  
 and I doubt not that every county would  
 follow their example, were they impartially  
 informed of the principles which directed  
 his conduct, and of the provisions enacted  
 by the statutes of the realm.

In a case of necessity, where the safety of  
 the kingdom calls upon the two Houses of  
 Parliament, and where no positive provision  
 has been made by law, their right of inter-  
 position exists of course. Where a positive  
 provision



provision *has* been made, their right of interposition is so far excluded.

Now, the law has enacted that no bill shall pass, without the Great Seal of England annexed to it; and, during the personal incapacity of the Monarch, *that* instrument can only be commanded and affixed by the Regent of England.

I ask you then candidly, whether in the case supposed, *a positive law has not been made*, which excludes any person from being legally Regent of Ireland, except the Regent of England, and of course excludes the Lords and Commons from appointing any one else? For no person is *capable* of being appointed to any trust or office which he is by law *incapable* to exercise.

What then is become of the competency of the two houses, and their assumed right of investing the Prince of Wales with royal power before he was Regent of England; since you must acknowledge that his Highness was, at the very time you offered that power, disqualified by your own statutes, and barred from acceptance by legal incapacity? Were I dubious on a point so plain and evident, Mr. Grattan's reserve, and your own silence would have forced my conviction: When *he* declined to give his own construction of the address, and *you* refused to declare your intentions as to presenting it, though both interrogated and pressed on all sides,  
what

what confession could have been more eloquent and persuasive?

If then, a positive provision has actually been made by law, which limits and confines the Houses of Parliament to one specific line of conduct, and consequently prevents every right of election and choice, I have no hesitation to pronounce, that were this provision inconvenient and even dangerous, they are still incompetent to depart from it: but much more incompetent are they to disregard a provision, which is clearly calculated to complete and finish the constitution, and by preventing the separation of the executive, to maintain the unity of the empire.

Having incidentally observed upon a few of the reasons which support your resolutions, I shall now consider the remainder as they apply to the measures resisted in the last session, or adopted since its close, by government.

What, sir, is the mighty benefit which Ireland would derive, were government to commute its prerogative for Mr. Forbes's pension-bill? A fund of 80,000*l.* at the minister's discretion, besides whatever the crown may please to bestow upon its relations, or can be squeezed from complaisant majorities, might perhaps alter, it could not remove the complaint. Is the evil of a practice, considered as unconstitutional, and stigmatised as odious, to be cured by a legal  
and

and therefore constitutional pension establishment? And are we to perpetuate the power of corruption with a view to abolish influence, and introduce œconomy? When the leaders of the Whig Club were nearly seated on the Treasury Bench, it was an admirable device to get rid of an unpopular question, to secure a contested prerogative, and to preserve unlimited, under the mask of limitation, the most exceptionable branch of public expenditure.

What again would be the advantage of limiting the number of placemen to sit in parliament, while the number of places continue the same? The quantity of influence remaining undiminished, it would merely work in a more secret channel, more dangerous, as less apparent; more effectual, as less suspected; besides, I greatly fear, that under the pretence of reform, we should only aggravate the power of aristocracy.

But who can measure the benefit which must result to Ireland, were the votes of revenue officers to be abolished? The gratification of personal animosity—the transfer of influence in one or two boroughs from one family to another—The depriving innocent men of their legal birth-rights or purchased franchises, without the slightest proof, or even charge of criminality.—How dignified and generous a scheme! a system, how impartial and comprehensive! Such is not the reform that is demanded, or will content the people of Ireland. When a measure of this

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- nature



nature comes forth, they expect its appearance in its genuine and glorious shape; not hatched by local interest, not engendered by private pique, but the generous offspring of disinterested patriotism, demolishing all family usurpation, extirpating aristocratic dominion, and distributing to all descriptions of men *that* measure of power and privilege which is proportionate to their properties and interests in the state.

But these objects, however great, are still inconsiderable, when put in competition with the repeal of the Police Act. This bill, with all its sins upon its head, has absolutely changed the face of the metropolis.—Within a few years the city of Dublin was a disgraceful scene of perpetual riot, disorder, and outrage. In this quarter the passenger was in dread of the chalking knife; in that he was in danger of being houghed; robbers and house breakers committed their depredations in enormous gangs; citizens walked the streets in the evening with their swords drawn; mobs were reduced to system under regular leaders, and established committees, with modes of attack, of punishment, and torture of their own; they were ready at the sound of a bell, the summons of a hand-bill, or for a given price, to destroy a fellow citizen, demolish a warehouse, or attack the parliament. Plans were laid to tar and feather the Viceroy; the theatre became the scene of insult to his person;—*even the shrine of patriotism was no longer,*

ger safe, but was scarcely protected from destruction by a military patrol.—At length the legislature was shamed into a measure of public energy and spirit: the Police Act passed and the disorder ceased.

This establishment certainly gave influence to government, and increased the charge on the citizens, but while the memory of disturbance was yet fresh, while the contrast between recent outrage and present tranquillity, past dangers and existing security, was new and striking, all objection to the measure was lost in the magnitude of its benefits; nor would a murmur have ever arisen, if some neglect in the directors of the scheme had not given materials for justifiable complaint. The abuse of management is, however, an argument to reform, not to abolish a system: and a parliamentary committee having defeated their own object, by exceeding their powers, government have endeavoured to effectuate what their imprudence rendered abortive. Much exertion has, I hear, been used to introduce every possible œconomy and good management into the Police, and seemingly with effect. But it unfortunately happens, a quiet metropolis is an insuperable bar to patriotic efforts. Good order, peace, and tranquillity are the strongest arguments in favour of government, while public discontent and tumult furnish, at once, the implements and arguments of opposition. The army of faction is the mob.

Such was the cargo of promissory benefits imported last session. These were the fruits destined to adorn the golden æra of Mr. Fox's ministry, had not his Majesty so critically and so cruelly nipped them in the bud, by his unhopèd for and ill-timed recovery.

Unfortunate people of Ireland! on the one hand a pension establishment of 80,000l. a year, with an unlimited power in the king and parliament to increase it by addresses or grants, to relations of the crown, or to favourites of the minister, is not suffered to grace your constitution! A bill to conceal under the pretext of reducing influence, and to render it more pernicious as more aristocratical, has been consigned to sleep with its ancestors!

On the other hand, what grievances are allowed to remain? Revenue Officers retain their legal franchises, and Dublin is protected by an effectual Police.

Was this, sir, the price for which Ireland was to be sold to Mr. Fox? Were these the stipulations of our negociators, when they signed a definitive treaty with British opposition? Concession without advantage, for alliance without principle. Ideal benefits for factious support. No plan of mutual intercourse; no mitigation of duties; no extension of the navigation-act; no encouragement to the productions of our soil, or to the sale of our manufactures;—nothing, in short,



short which can evince abilities on one side, or liberality on the other.

If we cannot applaud the talents of our would-be ministers, we must at least admire the ingenuity of Mr. Fox and his party, pledged and committed as they stand against the commerce and manufactures of Ireland. Thus can I fancy Mr. Fox to have addressed our Irish negociators. “ If you, gentlemen, “ will undertake to support all our measures “ here against the King and the Constitution, “ at the expense of national loyalty and “ principle, and in defiance of your own “ laws, and your own Revolution in 1782, “ you certainly have every claim to our “ assistance and gratitude in return. But I “ warn you not to expect payment in con- “ cessions of trade and commerce. If you “ wish the means of becoming rich and flou- “ rishing like ourselves, to those we can ne- “ ver consent. The Duke of Portland and “ myself, have publicly pledged ourselves, “ that we never at any time intended to give “ you advantages of that sort, and further “ that we never would. Drive such projects “ from your head, and your wishes shall be “ gratified in popular bills. It must be your “ part to divert the Irish from points of in- “ terest to points of speculation. If they “ talk of manufactures, substitute ideas of “ dignity. If they harp on the navigation- “ act, mount them on the hobby horse of “ independence. Perhaps you might frame “ a pension

“ a pension and a place bill, in such a man-  
 “ ner as to alter the current of influence in  
 “ your own favour, without diminishing its  
 “ streams. By following our example, and  
 “ robbing the revenue officers of their votes,  
 “ you might acquire the reputation of refor-  
 “ mers: and were you to destroy the police  
 “ act, you would undoubtedly have the mob  
 “ to a man.”

Such is the language we may naturally im-  
 pute to Mr. Fox. And here let me remark,  
 that when *we approve of his principles because*  
*they are our own*, we bind ourselves neither  
 to propose nor suffer any concession from  
 Great Britain in favour of the commerce and  
 navigation of Ireland, and in compliment to  
 the principles of the Whig Club, we are to  
 renounce for ever the interests of our native  
 country.

But who can view the conduct of govern-  
 ment since the close of the session, without  
 the emotions of indignation? Dismissals so  
 unmerited! Rewards and honours so proflig-  
 ate!

Speaking the language of an Utopian, I  
 must freely own that all influence is indefen-  
 sible. Let government be pure and the par-  
 liament virtuous. Let each man be alive to  
 the interests of his country and dead to his  
 own. Such is the desire and the despair of  
 honest patriotism; a state of perfection which  
 few men are profligate enough not to wish,  
 and no one fool enough to expect. Preju-  
 dice,

dice, passion, avarice, ambition, disappointment and revenge, every base and every noble instinct, are for ever at work upon the public stage: no means must be neglected to manage their hostile tendencies, to cast their respective parts, and reduce them to subordination and use in the great drama of society.

But who, to render influence unnecessary and destroy its justification, would hoist the flag of party, and project alliances with foreign faction? Measures of this nature serve to sanctify, not to condemn its exercise, they even confirm its necessity and warrant its encrease. The way, said Mr. Grattan, in 1782, to make ministers economical, is to support them for nothing, upon principles of virtue. Shall we now with the same view oppose them in every thing upon the principles of party?

What, however, if upon this charge of influence, government were even to challenge the accusations of the Whig Club and dare them to a trial? The promises of administration in the last session are known because they have been performed. The promises of the Whig Club are not so fortunately proved. Will they agree to the following issue? Let their agents be publicly examined upon *oath*, as to their fabrications of falsehood respecting the King's health, their plans of intimidation, their schemes of deception, not to mention the enormous list of places, pensions,



pensions, and peerages, which it is known adorns the kalendar of their engagements. Let the whole be laid before an impartial public. Government will be proud to await their just award.

But every thing is fair in opposition, all things are lawful to party. To decoy the servants of the crown, by every artifice and falsehood; to play upon the hopes, the fears, the wants and vanities of men; to subdue by menace; to cajole with flattery; to win by promises; these are virtues in *genuine Whigs*—These are perfections in *ardent lovers of liberty*. But to dismiss a relentless opponent, to reward a loyal adherent, is in government the proof of the most wanton cruelty, and the most profligate corruption.

Mr. Fox indeed seems of a different opinion; he was wicked enough on the 19th of January last, to impute all the important services which Mr. Pitt had rendered his country, to the use of the emoluments and patronage of the crown. He even refuses to accept the administration of affairs, unless accompanied by all the powers of influence annexed to it by the constitution. Such are the declarations of the great leader of English opposition, *whose principles are applauded by the Whig Club as their own*, however they may abuse the government that dares to act upon them. Doubtless, in Mr. Fox they are bold and constitutional; in Lord Buckingham they are cowardly and corrupt: in the former

former they are the basis of our admiration and support: in the latter they are the ground of our censure and opposition.

But whence is all this clamour against Lord Buckingham? After the proclamation of a general amnesty, a certain set of men persisted in opposition and renounced all connexion with the King's representative. Is government vindictive in dismissing those men from the offices, who have voluntarily abjured the service of the crown? Is the ridiculous doctrine to be revived, of taking up arms against the King, in support of his person? of employing his patronage to subvert his government, on the pretence of maintaining his authority? Surely Lord Buckingham has not copied the Duke of Portland's system. He has not discarded those who in conjunction with his own favourites, supported the King's administration: He has not admitted his friends to turn king's evidence, and claim the rewards of the crown, for sacrificing their accomplices: nor has he revived that singular plan of vicarious punishment, in expiating the crimes of his relations by the blood of their associates.

The dismissals forced from Lord Buckingham were measures of necessity, not of choice: the favors he bestowed were neither extravagant nor unserviceable. Two Commissioners of Revenue have been created, and the Board of Imprest and Stamps separated:—but the expence has been nearly supplied,

plied, by the suppression of the Vice-treasurership. Arrangements of utility and business have succeeded an useless sinecure. Here it might almost be wished that your accusation were completely true, and that addition of expence were accompanied by encrease of influence. But the aristocratic powers of Lord Shannon, the Duke of Leinster, and the Ponsonbys, are not so easily compensated:—As for myself, I consider the late alteration of patronage, as a noble theme for the eloquence of faction, and the equity of candor. Rancour and disappointment will heighten and aggravate: truth and impartiality will justify or excuse.

The necessity which creates an engagement generally disappears before its completion:—when danger is over we are apt to condemn the measures which preserved us. But principles more generous, will actuate the public mind, as they have already influenced private meetings. When, in the course of last winter, it was proposed to resist every new expence, which might result from the distresses of government, the motion insidiously made, was honourably negatived: “No, said gentlemen, it would be too unfair and ungenerous, to necessitate expences by our own conduct, in order to condemn what we ourselves had occasioned.”

Lord Buckingham was undoubtedly reduced to a most embarrassing dilemma, between his wishes of œconomy and his fears of  
of



of ingratitude. He stood as it were exposed to a double fire from his adversaries; on one side, the charge of public profusion, on the other, the imputation of private treachery. Has he then made a wrong election, in consulting the honour of his own mind, and relying at the same time on the generosity of Irishmen? Has he made an erroneous judgment of our liberality, in calling us to defend our Sovereign's justice for rewarding the firmness of constitutional loyalty?

When you lament the want of adequate responsibility, in the persons who direct the affairs of Ireland, I am not certain that I understand your meaning.

Do you wish a revival of those happy times, when Ireland was directed by *undertakers*? When an aristocratic junto, possessing an attached majority in both houses of parliament, stipulated to carry on the King's business, for a certain portion of patronage. Alas! sir, Ireland has had a long and bitter experience of such responsibility; she wishes not to return under that humiliating yoke.

—*quæ bellua Ruptis*  
*Cum semel Effugit reddit se prava Catenis?*

Is there one solitary boon or blessing which the Whig aristocracy of Ireland, linked and united as it was with the Whig aristocracy of England, can boast to have procured for their unhappy country from the government of the Duke of Grafton, which begun the system, to the viceroyship of Lord Townshend, who destroyed it? No hope of enlargement

to our fettered commerce;—no dawn of enfranchisement to our enslaved constitution—but a long and dreary night of bigotry and oppression, the gloomy and disastrous reign of Whig cabal.

But possibly you may allude to the institution of an Irish cabinet, composed of persons holding confidential offices, wherein each member shall have the power to propose any measure he may please, and each question shall be determined by a majority of votes.

If this is your intention, you will please to recollect, that a Lord Lieutenant and his Secretary must have a decided majority in such a cabinet, or the reverse. The former alternative would leave matters just as they are; the latter would render government impracticable.

What nobleman would undertake the conduct of Irish affairs, when he could be neither certain of effecting, or even of resisting any measure whatsoever?—Perpetually at the mercy of his cabinet, he would scarcely retain the shadow of authority—a contemptible cypher without power—the mock representative of royalty. No plan, however hostile to the interest of Ireland, however dangerous to the existence of the empire, but might be carried against him. He might be forced to abet his own disgrace, and to second, with all the power of prerogative, the ruin of his government.

This

This is a true revival of Trinculo's kingdom: the government of a Lord Lieutenant with a cabinet to be viceroy over him. It is the counterpart of the coalition scheme, to abolish all personal influence in the King, and reduce the royal power to ceremonious pageantry.

I need not repeat, that no character of spirit, of experience, of ability, would condescend to a situation so degrading and ignominious. For the puppet in such a scene, we must search for some leading nobleman in the ranks of whiggism, whose virtues result from his ignorance, whose consequence is derived from his stupidity.

I am sensible this scheme has long been a favourite speculation in some fantastic minds, who are either blind to the effects of such a system, or impatient for its consequences. An Irish independent cabinet, would as effectually tend to separate this kingdom from Great Britain, as the choice of a separate executive. And it is certainly consistent in those who have asserted the right of electing the former, to inculcate the expediency of establishing the latter.

The responsibility which exists, is the only responsibility compatible with our situation. I. There is a right, a power, and a duty in the officers of the crown to resist and prevent the execution of any measure they may deem objectionable. II. There is a standing tribunal in the parliament, before which every act and every expence of government is annually



nually submitted. Lastly, there is a final judicature in the nation sufficient to check the most corrupt ministers, and to punish the boldest.

At length, sir, I am arrived at your last resolution, and touch with pleasure the goal of my understanding. And here, sir, let it be admitted on the one hand, that if there was no express compact, there was at least an honest intention in government to confine its expences within the grants of 1785. Will you, sir, on the other hand, with the same candour, acknowledge, that if there was no express compact, there was at least an honest intention in parliament, that those grants should be received in the treasury, net and uncurtailed? Whatsoever faith was stipulated, whatsoever bargain was made, if any was made at all, it certainly was reciprocal, and both parties are mutually bound, or are equally free. You will call then to your mind, that the additional taxes in 1785 were calculated on the statement of the national accounts, as they appeared at Lady-day 1784. At that period, the amount of bounties scarcely exceeded 70,000l. a year. Since that period they have been annually double, or more than double. Half the estimated produce of those taxes which were solely intended for the purposes of government, have been diverted to circulate our exports.—What then? Shall the evidence of our prosperity

perity make government criminal? Shall the increase of our commerce form a charge of profusion? Or did parliament hold out additional taxes with a *fraudulent foresight*, that a moiety of their produce would be intercepted? Was it the original intention of the Commons to violate their own engagement in the hope of fixing a breach of faith on administration?

When, therefore, you attack the extravagance of government since the year 1785, calculate at the same time the excess of your bounties since that period. If the amount of the excess shall be more than the arrears on the establishments, there can be no accusation at all; if it be less, the difference alone can constitute the measure of criminality. Any other mode of attack would be as unfair to government, as dishonourable to parliament, and at once the result and the proof of a disappointed and disingenuous party.

You will not be surprised that I have not dwelt upon your resolutions, to adhere to Great Britain on the one hand, and to prevent an union on the other. The sincerity of the former, the necessity of the latter resolution require no proof or illustration, when proceeding from a body of men, who assert the right of choosing a separate executive, and who make the establishment of British party the soul of their system. When one principle is laid down for dividing the empire, and another

ther to throw it into confusion, it is but decent to varnish them with the gloss of patriotism.

I will now dismiss your declarations and resolutions with a few remarks. Your premises I have shewn to be false, and your object pernicious. The benefits you hold out as a stalking-horse, are contemptible when compared with the mischiefs they are meant to cover. If the establishment of British party were to be the consequence of measures tenfold more advantageous than the paltry projects of the Whig Club, I would scorn to purchase them at so fatal a price.

When I found you setting out with the absurd calumny of asserting, that a premeditated plan was laid to sap our liberties, I wished to consider the charge as a ridiculous fally of wild intoxication. If it was composed in the cool hour of sobriety, consider for a moment the sentiments it betrays. Is it not an indirect confession, that nothing can justify the introduction of British party, but a direct attack upon our rights and constitution? And you have been obliged to forge the premises in order to justify the conclusion.

What must be the self-condemnation of the Whig Club, when to sanctify their origination, Mr. Pitt and his administration are proclaimed traitors? They support the misgivings of conscience by the fabrication of slander.

You



You shall now enjoy for a moment the rapture of a prophet, on seeing his predictions accomplished. I will delineate a picture of the Whig Club triumphant.

Imagine then, this glorious society raised to public estimation and powerful in numbers, supported by a majority in both Houses of Parliament, and not unpopular in the nation. Imagine Mr. Fox continuing in his present forlorn condition, without the smallest hope of regaining the esteem of the British nation, of recovering the confidence of his Sovereign, or undermining Mr. Pitt's well founded popularity. By the means of the Whig Club he becomes the governing and ministerial power in Ireland. Here he exults and triumphs over his adversary; thwarts his administration with success; combines the parliament against his measures, enlists the people against his character, excites the country to discontent, to clamour, to resistance, and attributes the effects of his own machinations to the incapacity and mismanagement of Mr. Pitt.

What must be the conduct of the British minister? Conscious of his own rectitude, aware of the designs of his opposer, he will exert all the influence he can extract from Irish prerogative, all the force he can collect from the attachment of Great Britain, to reduce the influence of the Whig Club. Otherwise he must submit to the disgraceful condition, that Irish faction shall be allow-

ed to dictate the ministers of England. Or shall we suppose a state of things still more improbable to arrive and impossible to continue, the existence of two administrations, two separate and hostile cabinets, one for the conduct of Great Britain, the other for the direction of Ireland, hating, despising, distrusting, and opposing each other, uniting in no one principle, but the accomplishment of their mutual ruin, and sacrificing to that main object, the prosperity, the peace, if not the existence of the empire.

Having thus feasted your imagination with the happy prospect of British party triumphant in Ireland, I will leave you to enjoy the enchanting scene, and address myself to the people.

“ MEN OF IRELAND,

“ Your Sovereign, to whom the nation  
 “ is more indebted than to all the Monarchs  
 “ that have worn the Crown of Ireland, is  
 “ recently recovered from the most severe  
 “ and afflicting malady. His administration  
 “ is universally beloved at home, respected  
 “ and dreaded abroad. During their guidance  
 “ of affairs, Great Britain has been  
 “ gradually redeemed from the calamitous  
 “ consequences of an expensive and disastrous  
 “ war, which had brought her to the  
 “ verge of bankruptcy and ruin. A bold and  
 “ fortunate system has increased her revenues  
 “ and re-established her fallen credit.  
 “ Her

“ Her drooping commerce and decaying  
 “ manufactures have revived and bloom  
 “ with redoubled vigor. Treaties the most  
 “ difficult and beneficial have been effectu-  
 “ ated. Old alliances renewed and streng-  
 “ thened. France has been disappointed in  
 “ her treacherous projects, and her naval  
 “ union with Holland has restored the su-  
 “ premacy of her marine. The influence  
 “ of an administration so wise, so powerful,  
 “ so prosperous, could not but extend to  
 “ this country. When was our credit at  
 “ so high a flow? or our exports so vari-  
 “ ous and so valuable? The extension and  
 “ improvement of our agriculture is the  
 “ theme of our wonder. The rapid increase  
 “ of our staple manufacture astonishes. In-  
 “ dustry and content have struck their roots  
 “ in the soil, and are producing abundant  
 “ fruits of prosperity and happiness.

“ Is this the critical moment to conjure  
 “ up the ghost of grievance? To publish  
 “ manifestoes of discontent? and diffuse a  
 “ spirit of suspicion and distrust in our sove-  
 “ reign’s government?

“ Because the British minister in the hour  
 “ of trial, scorned to abandon his king, or  
 “ betray the constitution, but following the  
 “ sublime suggestions of an heroic mind,  
 “ cast behind him every low and personal  
 “ consideration in his exalted career of duty  
 “ and loyalty :—Because the Irish Lord Lieu-  
 “ tenant disdained to swerve from the same



“ line of public honour and private gra-  
 “ titude, but uncontrouled by majorities,  
 “ unawed by trimphant party, grappled him-  
 “ self to the laws, clung to the empire, and  
 “ upheld the revolution of 1782 in spite of  
 “ those who had originated, those who had op-  
 “ posed, and of all who deserted it—Because,  
 “ I say, his Majesty’s servants were thus  
 “ proved in the hour of trial, disinterestedly  
 “ loyal, and constitutionally firm—shall we  
 “ countenance a scheme to represent them as  
 “ insidious enemies of our rights, and un-  
 “ derminers of our renovated liberties?

“ Are we to join in a project to drive such  
 “ ministers from the helm, and force upon  
 “ our Sovereign, a junto of characters, whose  
 “ disunion dismembered the empire, whose  
 “ coalition endangered the monarchy?

“ Have we not causes enough for domes-  
 “ tic dissention within ourselves, but we  
 “ must import fresh materials from abroad?  
 “ Religious differences, electioneering con-  
 “ tests, family cabals; cannot these supply  
 “ sufficient fuel to the *ardent lovers of liberty*?  
 “ Must we envenom the bitterness of internal  
 “ jealousies by the rancorous infusion of Bri-  
 “ tish party?

“ Recently you contended for rights, for  
 “ independency, when the combat alone was  
 “ fame, and even defeat would have left you  
 “ covered with glory. You are now invited  
 “ to struggle for the Irish aristocracy and the  
 “ British coalition, where success must be  
 “ accom-

“ accompanied with destruction and disgrace.

“ Consider the nature of that confederacy, which summons you to support their cause, a motly compound of the uniform supporters and the uniform opposers of every government; of those who asserted and those who resisted the restoration of your rights; of those who had previously procured or previously rejected every measure of last session, which they are now contending to repeal or establish. A crew so various in principle, so contrasted in conduct, should alternately provoke your smiles or your indignation. You abjure the agents of British party, you only laugh at the knot of *congenial* characters.

“ Let me address you with a few words of exhortation. Recollect, consider and uphold the doctrine of Lord Fitzgibbon. *Independence upon the parliament of Great Britain, is our freedom. Dependence upon her crown is our security*—separate legislatures, unity of executive. These are the bulwarks of our empire:—remove the one, we surrender our liberties:—take away the other, we dissolve our connexion with England. Adhere to your charters;—the British act of Mr. Grenville—the Irish act of Mr. Yelverton—these are the landmarks of our constitution. Whoever with profane hand shall obliterate their characters, or weaken their sacred authority, cannot  
“ be

“ be the friends of Ireland. Those who pro-  
 “ cured the former and support the latter,  
 “ cannot be her enemies.

“ As to British party, banish it for ever  
 “ from the land. It is a principle which will  
 “ corrupt your efforts however virtuous, and  
 “ hang the most pernicious consequences on  
 “ the wisest measures. Suffer it not to infect  
 “ the purity of your constitutional atmos-  
 “ phere. More fatal to our political, than  
 “ the adder to our natural existence, may it  
 “ meet a similar fate, and if it touch our  
 “ coasts, expire.”

Thus, sir, I have appealed to my country-  
 men, whilst their minds may be still unim-  
 pregnated with the contagion of party. Could  
 I hope that your judgment were equally un-  
 tainted, how confidently would I summon  
 your zeal to second my address.

I now then recapitulate, and conclude—A  
 libel against the King's servants, at which  
 every serious man revolts—the adoption of  
 principles at which the constitution is alarmed  
 —the right of separating from England, with-  
 out necessity or pretence, at which every  
 friend to the empire must shudder. These  
 are the first fruits of the Whig Club, and we  
 are taught to expect a future harvest in the  
 distractions of a double cabinet, and the con-  
 vulsive struggles of British faction. What if  
 these objects are veiled with little measures  
 of reform, and shaded with projects of œco-  
 nomy? Is the bait intended to secure us from  
 the



the hook, or the lure to drive us from the snare? And will Ireland be the dupe of such shallow pitiful deception?

A treacherous and pernicious trap, for unsuspecting and giddy youth—an asylum for disappointment and discontent, for baffled ambition and defeated aristocracy—the last and wretched hope and reliance of English party—Such is the Whig Club in the eyes of a serious, an honest, and a loyal people.

Whilst the nation acknowledges with gratitude, the inestimable benefits they have derived from the virtues of their Sovereign, whilst they view with satisfaction their rapid progress to wealth and prosperity under the protection of his ministers, they will not conspire to work the downfall of the one, or disturb the happiness of the other.

Grateful for the acquisition, content in the enjoyment of a free and mild government, they will mark their sense of the blessing, by loyalty to their King, fidelity to the constitution, and attachment to Great Britain—avoiding every source of division—every artifice of domestic cabal—every scheme of foreign faction, however concealed under the graces of popularity, or disguised in the vision of patriotism.

Your obedient Servant,

Dec. 14, 1789.

&c. &c.

*A Friend to Ireland.*



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Dublin, August 19th, 1789.

R E S O L U T I O N S  
AND  
D E C L A R A T I O N S  
OF THE  
W H I G C L U B.

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WHEREAS, under the circumstances of our renovated Constitution, we deem it necessary that a constant and unremitting watch should be kept against every step of encroachment upon those rights which have been lately re-established, and for the safety of which we cannot but apprehend more danger from an Administration, which has *already* insidiously attempted to infringe them, than we should from a Ministry formed of those Men, under whose power, and with whose concurrence they were originally restored to us, and whose Principles we must approve, because they are our own.

And whereas, at the present critical juncture, (when, besides many other alarming symptoms, we clearly perceive a settled and premeditated plan to sap the Liberties of Ireland, by overwhelming  
H her



her with expences, and consequent debt, in order to the increase of unconstitutional influence in her Parliament;) it is expedient to adopt every measure which may contribute to bring, and to keep together, Men of genuine WHIG PRINCIPLE, and consequently ardent lovers of their Country and of its Liberties:—We think it may be useful, to institute a Society of congenial Characters, under the appellation of the WHIG CLUB, so styled from the principles and motives of its Constituents.

And, That every Candidate for this Club, may be fully apprized of the motives and intentions of those with whom he wishes to associate, We have framed the following body of Resolutions and Declarations, to be perused and subscribed by all such Candidates, previously to their admission.

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RESOLVED,

THAT the great object of this SOCIETY, is the Constitution of the Realm, as settled by the Revolution in Great Britain and Ireland in 1688—and re-established in Ireland 1782.

THAT we will support and maintain, as a principal object and fundamental part of that Constitution—THE

“ SACRED RIGHTS OF THE PEOPLE;”

and above all, that great, indispensable Right of the Subjects of this Realm, to be free from, and independent on the Authority of any Parliament, or Legislature whatsoever, save only the Parliament of Ireland—that is to say, the King of Ireland, and the Lords and Commons of this Realm.

WE,

WE, therefore, protest against and abjure as illegal and criminal, a doctrine, which, on a late occasion, has been advanced, “ That the Parliament of another Country had, in the appointment of a Regent over this Realm, a Legislative Authority.”

WE declare, that the Parliament of Ireland—that is to say, “ The King of Ireland, and the Lords and Commons thereof, are the only legislature of this Realm.”

AND we further declare, that as far as in us lies, we will endeavour to preserve to this Country in all times to come, a Parliament of her own, residing within this Realm—and exclusively invested with all parliamentary privileges, and powers.

THAT we will for ever support and maintain the constitutional Rights and Dignity of the Imperial Crown of Ireland ; and we do abjure as illegal and criminal a doctrine lately advanced,—“ That his Majesty legislates in Ireland *as King of Great Britain*,” in as much as said doctrine is not founded in our Laws—militates against our Constitution—affects to depose the King of Ireland—and tends to dissolve the principles of our allegiance and our liberty.

THAT the best and surest method of preserving the constitutional Rights of the Crown, is to preserve and transmit the same in succession in the House of Brunswick.

THAT we shall ever adhere to the principles which directed the Lords and Commons of Ireland, when on a late melancholy occasion, they addressed his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to take on himself during his Royal Father's indisposition,

position, the administration of affairs, free from occasional and unconstitutional restrictions—such restrictions being more calculated to answer the views of ambition, than to preserve liberty, or to promote the solid interests of the Empire.

THAT we shall ever maintain and vindicate the principle and justice which actuated our Parliament, when on behalf of the People of this Realm, they did impose a *public and merited censure* on his Excellency the Marquis of Buckingham, for his ill-advised, unwarranted, and unconstitutional conduct.

THAT we will ever maintain as sacred and indissoluble our connection with Great Britain, being in our opinion indispensably necessary for the freedom of this kingdom in particular, and for the freedom, strength and prosperity of the Empire in general.

WE have set forth the great principles and objects of the Whig Club; and we have formed this Society, because we apprehend some of these objects are in danger.

THE Rights of the People of Ireland have been publicly and ministerially questioned by the present Chief Governor.

A right in the Parliament of another country to make Laws for this kingdom in the case of a Regency, has been by the Ministers of the Crown in Ireland, advanced and defended.

The competency of the two Houses of the Irish Parliament on a late occasion has been denied.

The legislative capacity of the King of Ireland has been denied, and the Great Seal of another  
Country



Country held up as a substitute for the Imperial Crown of this Realm.

The undue influence of the Crown over both Houses of Parliament has been of late beyond all example encreased.

A Pension Bill has been rejected by the influence of the present Ministers of Ireland.

A Place Bill has been rejected by the *same* influence.

A Bill for the better securing the freedom of Election, by disqualifying Revenue Officers from voting for Members to serve in Parliament, has been rejected by the *same* influence.

The present extravagant, ineffectual and unconstitutional Police of the City of Dublin, has been continued and patronized by the *same* influence.

All proceedings in Parliament to remove the grievance, or censure the abuse, have been resisted and defeated, by the *same* influence.

The expediency of combating by corruption, a constitutional Majority in Parliament, has been *publicly* avowed, and the principle so avowed has been in part carried into execution.

Honours, as we apprehend, have been sold, and the money deposited for the purpose of purchasing seats in the Commons for the dependants of Administration, in order to procure for the Minister a Majority in Parliament. For the same corrupt purpose useless offices have been created or revived.

Boards for the same unconstitutional and venal purpose have been divided: Sinecure office split to multiply the number of Commissioners, for no other  
other

other purpose than to encrease the influence of the Minister, and to gratify the individual.

For the same venal purpose, and with as little colour or pretence, Salaries have been augmented, to encrease the Parliamentary influence of the Minister, at the expence of the Nation.

A plan of intimidation has aided and abetted the views of Corruption; and Members of Parliament have, by the Minister, been expressly threatened with being made "*the Victims of their Votes*," or have been displaced for no reason or pretence whatever, except their constitutional Conduct in Parliament.

THAT we apprehend these proceedings and principles avow a design to govern this Country unconstitutionally, and must, if successful, render the Minister absolute in the Parliament of Ireland, by *Corruption*.

THAT this danger is the more to be apprehended, because there is no fixed or adequate responsibility in the situations of the persons who direct the affairs of this Country; and the Minister of Ireland (however culpable) is but too likely to elude Public Justice.

THAT to redress as far as in us lies, these Grievances, we have formed this Society, and resolved:—

THAT, in whatever situation we shall stand, we will exert our endeavours by all legal and constitutional means, to annul and do away all the Expences and Charges above alluded to; and in order to secure this Country against the repetition of such Grievances, We further resolve to struggle by the same means for the attainment of those objects,

jects, which at the close of the last session were *proposed* by the Minority in Parliament, and *resisted* by the Minister.

AND WHEREAS, in the year 1785, on the credit of a commercial adjustment, which for reasons never-to-be forgotten, did not take place—new taxes to the amount of 140,000*l. per annum*, were granted, under an engagement, that the economy of the Minister should co-operate with the bounty of Parliament, to prevent the excess of *expence* above *income*. We therefore think it the more incumbent on us as far as in us lies, to resist the present extravagance of Government, being a direct breach of the faith of Ministers, pledged on that occasion, as well as the certain means of encreasing the taxes and the debt of the nation, to supply *expences* incurred with a design to diminish her integrity, and undermine her freedom.

RESOLVED, that no Person elected into this Club, shall be considered as a Member thereof, until he has subscribed to the above Resolutions and Declarations.

RESOLVED, That these Resolutions be Printed for the use of the Members.

Signed by Order,

THOMAS CONOLLY, SEC. *cl.*





